

Section 3 Major Construction Incidents

2-301 General

This section provides guidelines for reporting and dealing with accidents and major incidents on construction projects. For detailed guidelines on reporting, see Chapter 19, “Special Reporting of Serious Injury, Illness, or Fatality,” of the *Caltrans Safety Manual*. This chapter also discusses special reporting for a serious occupational injury, illness, or fatality connected with any employment activity.

2-302 Reporting Procedures

Immediately report all reportable accidents and major incidents to the district dispatch center, or when this center is closed, to the headquarters Highway Information Center. Use Form CEM-0603, “Major Construction Incident Notification,” to fax an initial report to the Office of Safety and Health in the Division of Administrative Services, the Division of Construction, and the district construction safety coordinator. Follow the instructions on the back of the form. When necessary, also use Form CEM-0603 to fax an updated report providing supplementary information. The following are descriptions of reportable accidents and construction incidents:

2-302A Accidents To Be Reported

Report the following types of accidents:

- Accidents resulting in serious injury to a contractor’s employee.
- Accidents involving death or serious injury to a state or a consultant employee or resulting in the death of a contractor’s employee.
- Accidents involving serious damage to equipment owned by Caltrans, by a consultant, or by the contractor.
- Accidents resulting in the serious injury or death of a member of the public within the construction zone, or influenced in any manner by construction related activities, conditions, equipment, or personnel.
- All catastrophic types of accidents or accidents receiving wide media coverage.
- Accidents with no injuries, but with a high potential for being fatal or disabling. These accidents include falsework or guying system failures, overturned cranes, high-voltage power line contacts, trench excavation or shoring failures, gas or fuel line fire or explosions, hazardous utility breaks, and collisions with structures under construction or their supporting falsework that cause displacement of a major member.

Section 3 Major Construction Incidents

2-301 General

2-302 Reporting Procedures

2-302B Unusual or Extraordinary Construction Occurrences To Be Reported

Unusual or extraordinary construction occurrences are reportable incidents that may not be classified as accidents. Examples of these incidents include the following:

- Disasters that result in major damage to a state facility or project work.
- Situations that result in the evacuation of the project, the immediate area, or both.
- Any other events that affect the state facility or project work and may generate media coverage.
- Encounters of previously unknown hazardous waste on a construction project.
- A hazardous spill on a roadway within construction project limits.
- Any incident causing major traffic delays.

2-302C Highway Closure Notification

Report to the district dispatch center or the traffic management center any situation that requires unplanned closures of traffic lanes or the highway.

In advance, report routine planned lane closures to the district dispatch center or the traffic management center as required by district policy.

If the contractor cannot remove a lane closure by the specified pickup time, notify the district dispatch center or the traffic management center as soon as possible. Provide accurate information to allow the traffic management center to notify the California Highway Patrol, the media, and the public of possible delays.

2-303 Guidelines

Caltrans construction personnel responding to major incidents in construction zones must do the following:

- Take appropriate action without jeopardizing public or employee safety.
- Provide timely and accurate information to management to document the extent of the incident and identify major issues and current actions.
- Restore the transportation facility to full operation as quickly as possible in the event of a closure or restriction.
- Minimize or mitigate the effect on the public or the project caused by unusual or extraordinary occurrences.

Report hazardous waste encounters and hazardous spills as outlined under “Reporting Procedures” earlier in this section. For more information on the procedures to follow in the event of hazardous waste encounters or hazardous spills, see Section 7-106, “Environmental Hazards and Safety Procedures,” of the *Construction Manual* (manual).

The contractor must have a contingency plan for reopening closed traffic lanes. See Section 3-704B, “Contingency Plans for Reopening Lane Closures,” of this manual.



The district construction deputy director must activate a construction incident response team when warranted by the sensitivity and severity of a major incident. The team's principal purpose is to provide information to Caltrans managers and the media. The team enables the resident engineer to focus on restoring the transportation system, the project, or both. The team may also advise the resident engineer on technical matters. The construction engineer heads the team, which may also include the following personnel:

- A representative of the district public relations staff, depending on the media interest.
- Technical personnel from other functional areas such as safety, traffic, structures, design, or environmental, as required by the situation.